

A New Species of *Spongovostox* Burr (Dermaptera: Labiidae) from Nigeria

By A. BRINDLE*

A good deal of work has been done in recent years by Professor J. T. Medler, of the University of Ife in Nigeria, in connection with a survey of the insects of that country. This will result in a check list of the genera of insects recorded from Nigeria together with an adequate reference collection at Ife, primarily for teaching purposes at the Faculty of Agriculture.

During the course of this work Professor Medler has sent a large number of Dermaptera to the present author, which were particularly useful since Nigeria has been poorly known as far as Dermaptera are concerned, and the records so obtained have been published in the first part of *The Dermaptera of Africa* (Brindle, 1973). This covers all the families of the order except for the Carcinophoridae.

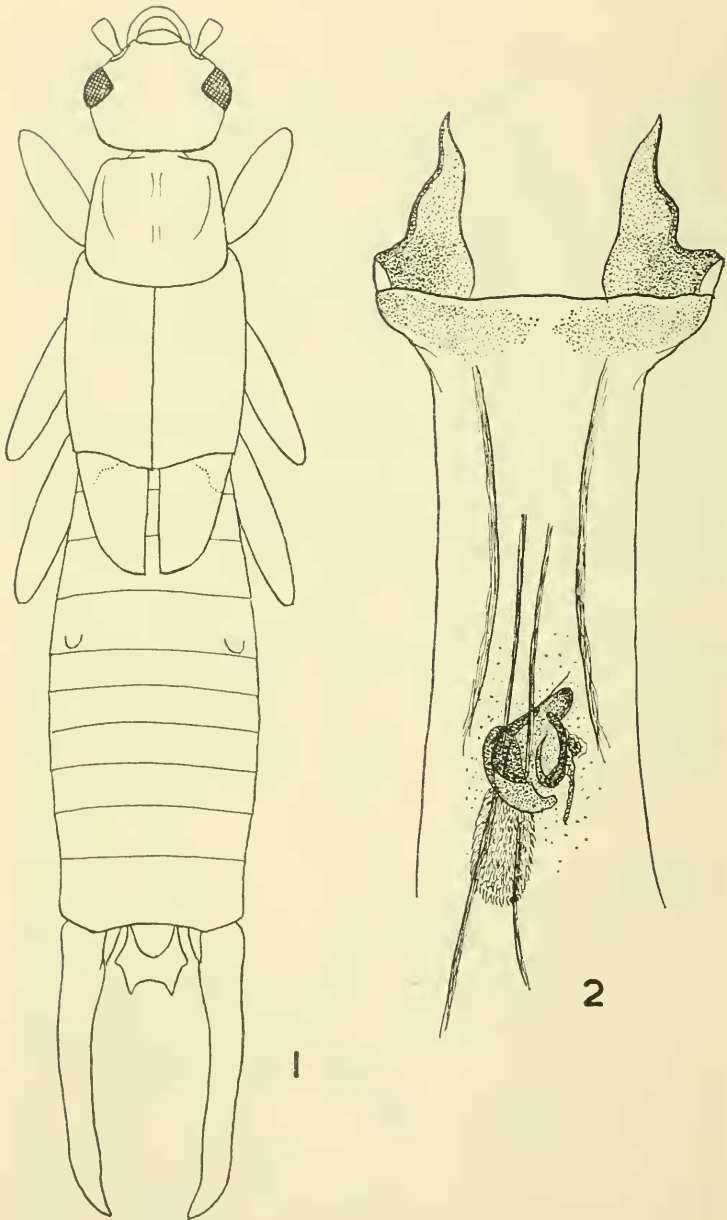
In more recent batches from Professor Medler, however, there have been two males of a striking new species of *Spongovostox*, which is described and figured in the present paper, together with indications of its separation from other species of the genus already known. It seems appropriate to dedicate this new species to Professor Medler in recognition of his work on the insects of Nigeria, and this I am pleased to be able to do.

Spongovostox medleri sp.n.

Black, rather dull; basal antennae segments yellowish-brown; pronotum very narrowly pale on posterior margin; elytra with an obscure pale lateral stripe which does not reach the posterior margin; wings with a very small pale apical spot, and with a larger pale spot on the external margin by the end of the elytra; apices of femora, and all tibiae and tarsi yellowish to yellowish-brown, tibiae vaguely darkened on external margins; segments 2-3 of tarsi also darkened. Cuticle of head, pronotum, elytra, and wings, smooth, rather dull, weakly and irregularly punctured and pubescent, pubescence short, sparse and yellow; abdomen more shining, almost glabrous, finely punctured, forceps almost smooth and glabrous.

Male (fig. 1): head strongly transverse, eyes large and somewhat protuberant. First antennal segment short, much shorter than distance between the antennal bases, second segment transverse, third nearly three times as long as broad, fourth about half as long as third, fifth nearly twice as long as broad, rather conical; distal segments narrow, slightly longer than third, all segments pubescent. Pronotum transverse, widened posteriorly, lateral margins straight and reflexed dorsally, posterior margin weakly convex. Elytra and wings fully developed, lateral tubercles on third tergite almost absent, those on fourth large. Last tergite transverse, depressed medially. Penultimate sternite with posterior margin evenly rounded. Each branch of forceps trigonal at base, cylindrical distally, almost straight, except

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Figs. 1, 2. *Spongovostox medleri* sp.n., male and male genitalia.

at apex, inner margin with irregular small crenulations. Pygidium pentagonal ventrally, each lateral angle with a rounded protuberance, posterior margin deeply excised. Length of body 9-9.5 mm., forceps 2.75-3 mm. Genitalia fig. 2.

Female: unknown.

Holotype ♂, Nigeria: Ile-Ife, W. State, Sept. 1971, black light trap, J. T. Medler (British Museum (Natural History)): paratype ♂, same data but 30th Dec. 1971, and not at trap (United States National Museum).

In Brindle (1973, p. 178) this species keys to the *quadrimaculatus* group, although the wings are only paler at extreme base. In that group it would key to *gestroi*, to which *medleri* is closely related. These can be separated as follows:—

1. Blackish-brown to yellowish-brown; pronotum broadly whitish on lateral or posterior margin; wings white for basal half; tibiae and tarsi yellow; parameres of male genitalia evenly and strongly curved *gestroi* (Burr)
- Black; pronotum very narrowly pale on posterior margin; wings whitish only at base; tibiae and tarsi partly darkened; parameres of male genitalia not curved and of unequal width (fig. 2) *medleri* sp.n.

Reference

Brindle, A. 1973. The Dermoptera of Africa, Part 1. *Ann. Mus. Roy. Afr. Centre.* in 8° Zool. No. 205, pp. 1-335.

Current Literature

Macrolepidoptera of Fiji and Rotuma: A taxonomic and geographical study by Gaden. S. Robinson, Ph.D. 361 pp. 15 maps, 173 text figures. 17 plates of 357 species. 10 habitat plates. Bibliography 16 pp. Limp covers. Price £10.50. Published by E. W. Classey Ltd.

The publishers are to be congratulated for issuing this thesis in book form. It is fortunate that this monumental study should have been made at this time, in an area where conservation is not practised, before the destruction of the primary rain forest causes the extinction of a unique fauna.

After a history of collecting in the islands, the geography, geology, climate and vegetation are reviewed. Then follows an account of light-trapping methods with a sophisticated statistical analysis of the results, which will fascinate all those who keep trap records. A systematic account, illustrated by superb photographs and line drawings, covers all the species known, and the probable course of colonisation and speciation are discussed. It is a pity that the order of the photographs does not follow that of the text.

The author has overlooked the probability that low levels of dominance in the absence of dominant plant species suggests that there are no polyphagous species present, or that polyphagy could account for the high levels of dominance at Santo 3 and Narabut.